
THE NINETEENTH UNITED PROVINCES
SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL
CONFERENCE

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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BY

P. SESHADRI, M. A.,

Principal, Government College, Ajmer

AND

President, All-India Federation of Educational Associations.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is now seventeen years since I was first invited by the United Provinces' Secondary Education Association, to preside over their annual conference, which was held that year in the ancient city of Benares. The Association had just started its existence and it was one of the earliest sessions, perhaps the third, held under its auspices. The profession could not be said to have been particularly well-organised at the time; the authorities of the Association had to do much to stimulate interest in the teachers themselves, but there was the inspiration and the hope that we were laying the foundations of a movement which would grow into power some day. In responding to a second request now, to preside over the nineteenth session of the same conference, I am conscious, I am coming to an organisation which has survived its early trials and difficulties, passed through its adolescence, become almost an adult and has become a great friend and champion of all secondary school teachers in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh.

I may confess, at the outset, that I have not the feeling I am an outsider here, in any sense, only invited to act as President for three days, but I feel I am one of yourselves and have always formed an integral part of your Association and your annual conferences. Technically, I may not belong to the United Provinces, as I was born in South India and at least, at present, my work is also in another part of the country. But I have spent as many as sixteen years, of my educational service in these provinces, which have been a second home to me, and it is not improbable, I may come back to them again at the end of my active life,

In any case, I am happy I am coming to a conference where I am being greeted by many old familiar faces, students, friends, old colleagues and co-workers in the cause of our profession.

It has also always been my endeavour to identify myself with all the ranks of the teaching profession in this country and work for the advancement of the profession all round, though my daily duties are in the sphere of University education. The various stages of education are really so intertwined that we cannot afford to think we belong to different categories. After all, we are members of one great brotherhood, striving to spread knowledge and illumination among different groups of the young in one country. While the conference is mainly concerned with problems of Secondary education, it is impossible to forget the fundamental oneness of all educational effort and the spiritual kinship of all members of the teaching profession.

Much has happened during this interval of seventeen years. I have had splendid opportunities of visiting many foreign countries, in the East as well as in the West, and observing educational conditions, not only in relation to the taught, but also with reference to our own profession. I have come back, deeply impressed with the great need for organising ourselves into powerful associations which will make themselves heard in the councils of the land. It will be long before we can hope to become as compelling in our influence as the National Union of Teachers in England or the National Education Association in the United States, but in organising conferences of this kind, I have no doubt, we are adding brick by brick to the construction of a similar edifice in this country, at least in the fulness of time.

II

Some idea of the vast influence for good which can be exercised by the Secondary school system of these Provinces can be realised from the circumstance, that you represent nearly two hundred Secondary schools, containing about a hundred thousand pupils, for whose future you are mainly responsible. Such an extensive section of educational work cannot be ignored with impunity and it is obvious that everything possible should be done to improve and advance its conditions.

In spite of all the educational discussions we have had in various parts of this country, it is doubtful if the aims of a sound system of Secondary education are very clear to the minds of even those who are directly concerned with it. There have been two mistakes in handling the subject. The Secondary stage has mostly been looked upon only as a corridor leading to the university, though only a small percentage of the pupils find entry into colleges. The syllabuses, examinations, and the entire organisation of the Secondary school system have been subordinated to the needs of University education, though the latter touches only the fringe of the community and the large bulk of those who receive the benefits of education or are found in services can be expected to possess only a High School Certificate. High School or Secondary School Leaving Certificate Boards have now been functioning for some years at least in parts of India, including the United Provinces, but it cannot be said that this has necessarily implied either freedom from the tyranny of the University, or the completeness necessary for a self-contained stage of education.

Errors of another kind there have been, consisting of

a mere intensification and prolongation of the subject and the studies of the Primary courses. There has been a wearisome grind of the same old subjects, only with some more detail filled in, and not much of an uplifted vision, for either preparing the pupil for complete living, or for the duties and responsibilities of citizenship, to quote some of the well-known definitions of the aims of education.

Bodies like your Association will be doing a very useful piece of service, by studying the problems of Secondary education, with special reference to Indian conditions and laying down for the benefit of the public, a clear statement of aim and method. One of the most comprehensive and useful discussions of Secondary education we have had in recent years, is the report of the Spens Committee on *Secondary Education With Special Reference To Grammar Schools And Technical High Schools*, published last year, under the auspices of the Board of Education in England. "In the interests of the large number of pupils who will leave school at or shortly after the age of sixteen", observes the report "we regard it, as one among a number of essential conditions, that the courses of instruction up to that age should be in some sense complete in themselves. Nor do we consider that this need or should prejudice the interests of those pupils who continue an academic education at school or elsewhere and go to a University."

The course of instruction for pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen should, according to the report, fulfil the following conditions :—

- (i) It should cater for the special needs of adolescence; that is to say, it should be related to the natural activities of body and mind during that

- period, and both illuminate and guide the pupil's experience.
- (ii) It should develop and harmonise the powers of body, will, intellect, emotion and conscience.
- (iii) It should not consist, to any considerable extent, in courses which are only of value if the subjects are carried further.
- (iv) It should be reasonably 'all-round' while giving full opportunity for the pursuit of individual interests.
- (v) It should stimulate or create the desire to continue some form of study, whether or not pupils leave school at sixteen.

A Secondary school, maintains the report, "must give the knowledge and training, required for the routine duties of adult life and also foster the creative impulses needed, not merely for new enterprises and adventures, but even for the daily adaptation of routine and technique to changing situations".

Among the other valuable ideas in the report is the need for teaching the twin subjects of History and Geography as recording and interpreting the human movement, History explaining the genesis of the present from the past and Geography teaching the dependence of man's activities upon the natural environment and their inner dependence all over the globe. There is also a powerful plea for bringing the ordinary Secondary school into closer contact, than at present, with the practical affairs of life, for making the curriculum more a matter of activity and experience, than

of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored; for inculcating a habit of mind which will ensure that while there is need for enthusiasm in causes which are felt to be vital, there is also need for study and judgment; for careful training in comprehension of what is read and in the expression of ideas both orally and in writing, and for the proper education for citizenship, particularly in view of recent developments in world-politics. "Democracy is now challenged" observes the report "and the duty of citizenship in a democracy renders it essential that all should be taught to understand and to think to the best of their ability".

It is matter for regret that we should not have as yet any such authoritative exposition of the principles of Secondary education in relation to this country. I commend the report to your serious attention and I hope you will be able to give similar guidance to India, in the light of your special knowledge and experience.

III

Regarding the current developments of Secondary education in the United Provinces, I have come here, I may confess at the outset, more to learn about them than to expound or interpret them. It is difficult to understand, to what extent, you have benefitted by the recent attempts at educational reform in your Provinces. Have the Basic schools been a success and have the teachers trained for them shown considerable superiority to the existing class, at least¹ in relating education nearer to practical life? Have they succeeded in imparting education through creative activity correlating hand-work with culture? Has their work resulted in any solution of the financing of Indian education? Has there been, in essence, any real advancement of Secondary education, either in quality or in quantity

and has a new order dawned upon your Provinces in matters educational? It is for you to answer these questions for the edification of the general public.

I may, however, draw attention to the fact that considerable headway has still to be made in these provinces in Secondary and other branches of education, even to compare favourably with the more advanced provinces in India, not to speak of some of the progressive countries of the West. According to the last Quinquennial Report on Education for 1932-37, issued by the Government of India this year, your Provinces had only 91,980 pupils in Secondary schools, while the Madras Presidency with almost an equal population, had as many as 164,600. The disparity is greater when we come to girls' education. The Madras Presidency had seventy High Schools for girls while you had only thirty four and the number of girls in the former was nearly two and a half times larger. The actual figures for the classes which constitute the 'high stage' are also discouraging. Madras had 64,795 pupils, in the 'high stage', while the United Provinces had only 26,528.

No system of Secondary education can be a success, unless it is broad-based on a flourishing ground work of vitalising Primary education, from which it can draw sustenance. Here, there is even more reason for discouragement, in spite of the undoubted progress which has been made in recent decades. The number of pupils in Primary schools in the Southern presidency was 2,875,117, while the number was less than half in the United Provinces, being only 1,280,883. It is essential in judging the prospects of educational advancement in any area to find out the percentage of pupils under instruction, fifteen percent of the total population being the general standard for children of school-

going age. While Madras has more than 7.1 per cent of the population at school, U. P. had only 3.4. The situation is much worse regarding the education of girls. Only one girl out of every fifteen who should be at school was actually receiving instruction in the United Provinces, while the proportion was four times higher in Madras. There has, however, been such rapid progress in the United Provinces in recent years, that at least the report for the next quinquennium, ending with 1942, should show more heartening figures.

A candidate whose paper I was valuing at one of our University examinations, the other day, declared that the United Provinces were the most advanced in India in matters educational, as they had five Universities, while most other provinces had only one or at best two or three ! He did not see the logical fallacy in his argument, but these statistics should make all educationists in these Provinces think furiously. In wealth of natural resources, richness of historical tradition and the intelligence of her people, the United Provinces are not behind any other province in India, and there is no reason why this comparative backwardness in education should not be remedied by the combined efforts of the people and the Government.

IV.

I have always held that Associations like yours should have a twofold aim, to work for the advancement of your profession and also to set up high standards of efficiency and conduct for your members. Never having been a believer in poverty, I have no hesitation in advocating your material advancement and the acquisition of reasonable wages, which will enable you to lead a decent and comfortable life and discharge your onerous duties without serious handicaps. I hope you will never get mesmerised by people

who ask you to wed yourselves to poverty, having themselves made piles of money in their own professions and even leading lives of luxury. They advocate sacrifice for others, taking care to put their own children into the most lucrative professions possible. Poverty is a curse, even if it is not the result of the sins of a past life, as is the popular belief among Hindus, and you must not be misled into glorying in it, in the name of the nobility of your profession.

You have not the monopoly of nobility of service, let me remind you: in fact, all service is noble, as Carlyle has repeatedly told us. The Judge who holds the scales of justice even among people is not less noble. The Doctor, who safeguards the life God has given us, to the best of his ability and skill, is in no way doing less commendable work. The Engineer who constructs works of beneficent activity, fertilising the parched-up land and opening the means of sustenance to thousands of hungry people is also doing work as sacred as yours. But nobody has suggested the ideal of poverty to the members of these professions. The advice is reserved only to the unfortunate teachers in our schools, perhaps because they are a gentle and docile class of people who can be exploited by members of the more aggressive professions who often manage to become, somehow or other, members of the Boards of control of our educational institutions.

It is good to recognise that in the modern world, where material circumstances play such an important and compelling part, poor wages can only be a serious handicap, particularly in view of the manifold and responsible duties expected of a teacher. You cannot have the peace of mind necessary for concentrated intellectual work, if you are continually worried with efforts for balancing

your monthly budget. If you have to run after tuitions of various kinds and wait upon your pupils and their parents in their homes, you cannot have any time for improving the treasures of your own mind. If you cannot afford to give your own children the education which you are offering to everybody's child, it is a tragedy of the most profound type. If by your dress and general equipment you are to be marked down easily, even by a casual observer, as 'only the schoolmaster', your position in society cannot be comfortable at all. More than all, if you are perpetually conscious of your less favourable position than that of the members of other professions around you, you are bound to suffer from an inferiority-complex and even lose self-respect, unless you are a person of very high character and wisdom.

Whatever conditions were in ancient India, it is impossible to reproduce them in the twentieth century, at least in the material sphere. "No river runs back to its source," wisely said William Morris. "The philosophy of the loin-cloth", as one of my distinguished friends has called it, can no longer apply to present conditions, whatever sentimental attraction the ideal may have to some minds. You cannot expect the teacher to-day to sit half-naked, under a tree on the banks of the Ganges, with a few boys round him who will collect fuel for him every day, beg alms for him from the neighbouring village and do all the personal service necessary for him, avoiding expenditure on the various amenities of life and therefore content with a nominal salary. You should not be apologetic at all in asking for better wages and better conditions of service, because you are doing it not merely for yourselves, but also for the educational advancement of your country which

is not possible without such improvement. I wish our public men also realise the truth underlying what the late Rt. Hon. Mr. Fisher meant, when he said that "a discontented teacher is a danger to the state!"

Things were bad enough at one time even in England, as far as the teaching profession was concerned, but conditions have improved enormously since the last War. It was realised that real educational efficiency was possible, only if the teaching profession was improved and placed in happier and more comfortable circumstances. The Rt. Hon. Mr. Fisher, as President of the Board of Education, was never tired of impressing on his countrymen, that expenditure on education was one of the best forms of national investment. One of the first things he did was to improve the salaries of teachers, introducing the well-known Burnham scales, the observance of which is compulsory for any school, if it is to receive official aid or even recognition. I observed the beneficent effects of this reform, during my visit to England in 1931, when I went round various schools in London, under the auspices of the Board of Education. It was difficult to discover the traditional picture of the poor, awkward ill-dressed teacher, man or woman. There were school mistresses who did not seem very different from the ladies one met with in an ordinary drawing room and there was nothing on the part of the average school master's dress or appearance which need have caused him any embarrassment. It was also pleasant to notice that several of them had come to school in their own cars.

Spending a delightful afternoon with the late Mr. Fisher in his rooms at New College Oxford, over which he presided with such distinction after he retired from the Presidency of the Board of Education, I had the pleasure of

congratulating him personally on what he had done to improve the condition of teachers in England. His face lit up immediately with a happy smile and he said it was a great satisfaction to him to see, when he had occasion to visit the houses of teachers, that they were now living in decent conditions. He was glad to find comfortable furniture, a well-stocked bookshelf in a corner, a gramophone or a radio-set, sometimes even a small two-seater in the adjoining garage, papers and magazines and well-fed children brought up in good surroundings as gentlemen's children are expected to be. May this not be a suitable ideal for an Indian minister, unless he intends that appeals to a life of poverty should be his only contribution to the advancement of education?

Visiting America soon after, in the same year, I noticed how American teachers were placed, even more favourably, though the general economic conditions are so advanced there that no comparison is possible with India. On the occasion of the World-Conference of Education in Denver, on the Rockies, teachers had assembled in thousands from more than fifty countries in the world, though I was the only delegate from India. We were all taken out on various excursions all over Colorado, motoring hundreds of miles over the Rockies, after seeing the various sights of the city itself. I noticed that most of our hosts were teachers in the various schools of Denver and they had all brought their own cars to show us round. Even making allowance for the fact that cars are very much more common in America than in any other country of the world, it indicated a highly satisfactory state of affairs for the teaching profession.

We can afford to be even more emphatic regarding suitable conditions of work and security of tenure. Written

contracts, arbitration boards in cases of dispute with your managers, a good Provident Fund and other amenities are your inalienable rights, as necessary in the interests of sound education itself, as they are for your own comfort and happiness. As the result of continual agitation, and consultations with the educational department, the teachers of Bombay have got some rules regarding conditions of service agreed upon, the enforcement of which should be a marked improvement. The teachers of the United Provinces can do no better than press for the adoption of similar rules here.

There are people who cast envious eyes on the vacations of the schoolmaster, under the impression that they are a luxury and they are not necessary for recouping mind and body. While the holidays are probably enough for normal purposes, it is matter for regret that we have no provision in India for a Sabbatical year of leave as in America. The daily grind and monotonous work of the teaching profession has the unfortunate influence of making the teacher lose his freshness of mind. It is an excellent idea, therefore, of compelling the teacher to go on an year's leave every seven years, on full pay, so that he can come back to his work with a mind refreshed by travel or study. Here is another legitimate demand to be put forward before the authorities concerned.

If I have supported your claims for better emoluments and better conditions of service with such keenness, I must be equally emphatic in insisting upon high standards of efficiency and character. Times without number, have I noticed teachers very inefficiently equipped for their task and displaying a reprehensible want of intellectual vigilance or even an ordinary sense of duty. *There are inefficient persons in all professions, but there are some in which the consequences*

are serious and should therefore find no quarter at all. The inefficient and neglectful lawyer, for instance, to whom the unfortunate client has to entrust life or property is undoubtedly a curse to society. Even a greater curse to society is the incompetent doctor to whom we entrust our bodies. But the greatest curse of all is the inefficient and characterless teacher who ruins the minds and souls of the unfortunate pupils entrusted to his charge!

V.

Not merely by virtue of being the President of this conference, but also as one who has already put in more than three decades of educational work, starting at the early age of nineteen, I may perhaps take the liberty of offering a few words of advice and exhortation to the teachers assembled here, regarding the methods for realising the high ideal expected of every member of our profession. When I was in Japan in the summer of 1937, representing the Government of India and the All-India Teachers' Federation at the World-Conference of Education held in Tokyo, I was approached by the Broadcasting authorities to give a special talk to the teachers of Japan in the hour set apart for the purpose in the weekly programme. The Director wanted, not a review of educational conditions in India or elsewhere, but "something of yourself", as he tried to explain. In response to his request, I spoke on the basic principles which should guide a teacher and enunciated the *Five Lamps of Education*, borrowing the title from Ruskin's famous book on the *Seven Lamps of Architecture*. I can perhaps do no better than repeat the substance of my talk here, though I am also intending to develop it into a volume at an early date.

First and foremost, there is the *Lamp of Knowledge*. There is nothing more important to the teacher than the

guidance of knowledge, and one who is not anxious to acquire it every moment of his life, may as well bid farewell to all hopes of achieving distinction. It is a great mistake to imagine that the preliminary intellectual qualifications with which a teacher starts are enough for his work. Often they are not, and imply only a beginning on the long and toilsome journey one has to undertake in the profession. Even the most brilliant of young men can acquire only an infinitesimal part of the total amount of knowledge in any particular branch of study during their stay at school or college, and it is only by persistent application in later years that they can cover any substantial part of the ground. Then what about the ravages of forgetfulness? What also about the increase in knowledge, with which one can hardly keep pace, except with the utmost vigilance and industry?

The ideal of the amount of knowledge to be acquired should be far above the every-day needs of teaching. It is a fatal mistake to aim only at knowing just what is enough to communicate to the class. A background of higher knowledge gives one a sense of confidence in his work of teaching and enables him to perceive the full bearing of the subject in all its details. The accuracy and precision necessary in all good teaching can come only to the teacher with deep and profound knowledge. The Lamp of Knowledge is of course intended to include knowledge of methods of teaching, quite as much as knowledge of the subject itself, the two qualities together, constituting the essentials of teaching on the purely intellectual side. Educational methods have advanced so much in recent decades, that it would be almost criminal on the part of any teacher, not to place the latest knowledge and experience of methods at the disposal of his class.

The *Lamp of Knowledge* cannot light up the entire way of a teacher's path, unless it is also accompanied by what may be called, the *Lamp of Love*. The Teacher deals in his classroom let him remember, not with mechanical units to be marshalled and manipulated, in accordance with certain rigid and immutable principles, but with highly delicate human organisms, each with a peculiarity of its own, requiring the most careful and affectionate guidance. He can be compared to a highly gifted gardener whose persistent endeavours and vigilant watching enable individual flowers to blossom into all their beauty of shape and sweetness of perfume. Educational systems make the unfortunate mistake of trying to reduce all to one mechanical pattern; but the successful teacher is he, who continually battles against the danger and is able to treat the children as quite independent personalities, each different from another.

So early as in the sixteenth century, Roger Ascham said in his *Schoolmaster*, that knowledge cannot be communicated in an atmosphere of fear, because when fear is roused, all other faculties are in suspense. It is surprising that even today there are teachers, who do not realise the value of this fundamental principle in education. Apart from the fact that affection and sympathy are expected of any decent teacher towards the young pupils entrusted to his charge, they are necessary even for the success of the teacher's work in the classroom and they may be practised at least for this reason, if not from any altruistic motives.

Allied to this is the *Lamp of Joy* without which all educational work must be depressing to the taught as well as to the teacher. The teacher must be a centre of joy in the class-room, radiating cheerfulness to every child. "He has always a smile on his face" is one of the highest compliments

which could be paid to any teacher. The teacher's profession is handicapped by a number of disadvantages, in emoluments and conditions of service, but cheerfulness is his duty in any adverse circumstances. Whatever his troubles in balancing his household budget and however wearing to the flesh and to the mind his mechanical daily grind of routine, he ought to be a picture of joy, inspiring the whole class to a happy frame of mind as he daily swims each morning into the orbit of their vision.

All the moral qualities necessary to make a teacher a model to his pupils may be said to constitute the *Lamp of Truth*. Whether direct, moral and religious instruction fulfils any useful purpose or not, there is nothing which exercises a more profound influence on a pupil's character than the teacher's own personal example. A high sense of duty; scrupulous adherence to truth; self-respect and dignity; these are qualities, the possession of which by a teacher will be easily noted by his class with highly satisfactory results, though they may not be immediate.

It has always seemed to me—though I have not seen the point elaborated anywhere—that one of the serious difficulties of the teacher's profession is the high standard of conduct expected to be lived by its members. The teacher cannot afford any lapse in behaviour or conduct, without losing his capacity for success in his work, however eminent his intellectual qualifications. He cannot be caught using bad language, or losing his temper, or even forgetting the laws of decorum, without serious consequences. He is always in the limelight, like well-known public men, being watched every minute by the argus-eyes of the young people who surround him. The need for high principles is all the greater in his case, as his example is infectious, and each act

of his is responsible for the conduct of many young men in his immediate neighbourhood.

There is need, again, for the *Lamp of Sacrifice*, Even if all the improvements demanded by the teaching profession are conceded, there would still be need for sacrifice on the part of its members. Its emoluments can never hope to rival those of professions like Law and Medicine—but it is to sacrifice of a nobler kind that I wish to refer to here. There is sacrifice in the mere choice of the profession. The teacher has to keep always the company of those who are intellectually at a lower level, from whom he can hardly expect any mental or cultural development. A good teacher wears his life out in the service of those who are entrusted to his charge and in a sense may be said to build up other lives, at the expense of his own. What greater sacrifice can be expected of any profession? Combined with sacrifice, there is idealism which ought to be the dominating principle of a teacher's life, more than that of any other. In no other profession is there such need for loftiness of aim and high ideals. It is idealism which makes the teacher's work yield its highest fruit and is responsible for lifting educational endeavour to real success.

VI.

There are now dangers of various kinds looming on the horizon of the educational world against which I must sound a grave warning. There is growing an unfortunate tendency in this country for education to get mixed up with political parties. It is proper that education should serve the larger ends of national life, but it is a potential source of great danger to the state, if any political party gets hold of the machine and keeps manipulating it for the propagation of its own doctrines. Let it be realised that this has brought

Germany and Italy under the heels of Dictators and it will be generations, for the people there to think for themselves, instead of being led by the nose by some powerful Dictator or other.

Apart from the risk of constant changes of policy inevitable where politics are concerned, it will not be the interests of the children and the building up of their personality which will become the primary concern of such a system, but the propping up of some fashionable political stunt or other. The question will be, not whether anything is sound educationally, but whether the younger generation can be regimented by it into a particular party. This has also the danger of narrowing the moral and emotional outlook of children. Instead of being brought up in an atmosphere of international good-will and word-wide human sympathy, they will be taught, unconsciously perhaps to hate people with different political opinions even in their own country. This is not the way of laying the foundations of national unity, nor working towards the great ideal of universal brotherhood.

This brings one to another menace which has reared its ugly head in some parts of India in recent years, the danger of communalism spreading to our temples of learning. It is bad enough that the elder generation of our politicians should often exhibit an intensely narrow and communal outlook, but all hopes of a great India at least in the future will have gone, if this evil is not nipped in the bud. Time was within my own recollection, when the boy at school or college never bothered whether the class-mate sitting next to him on the bench belonged to his faith or not. Much less did the teacher dream of making any distinction between those who belonged to his own community and

others, but circumstances seem to be drifting in the direction. The existence of communal differences outside the school may be an explanation, but any teacher who is true to his ideals should refuse, resolutely, to be drawn into this pernicious maelstrom. Inside the school, whatever may happen in the arena of politics, there is no Hindu or Mohammedan or Christian or Parsi. The teacher again, should belong in spirit to the community or race of each of his students and be their universal friend, philosopher and guide. One who gives room to the conviction that he is communal in his outlook, either in his dealings with his students or even with his colleagues, does not deserve to be kept in an educational institution, whatever his academic qualifications or his efficiency as a teacher. .

An allied manifestation of this evil is a desire perceived in some quarters to model the educational system itself on communal lines. under the mistaken conviction that the educational needs of one community must somehow differ from those of another. There may be need for special religious training or discipline peculiar to each community, but it is best to keep the public educational system above such considerations, paying attention to them outside the school. It is absurd to imagine that intellectual illumination and the training for complete living require communal differentiation. Two and two must make four for the Mohammedan as well as the Hindu; the Law of Gravity does not vary with the communal localities in a City and the great facts of history will not allow themselves to be manipulated to suit communal pride or sensitiveness.

But the greatest menace of all and one which has a more direct bearing on the everyday work of schools is the weakening of discipline, without which it is impossible either

to attempt to build up character or even to impart useful education. The British have given ample evidence, in their national history, of what discipline can do for the greatness of a people. We have before our own eyes enough proof to-day how the spirit is sustaining her mighty struggle against Germany. "Do you wish to command?—then learn to obey," said Burke and there can be no greater lesson to place before the young. It is alarming to see the numerous strikes of students there have been, in the United Provinces more than in other parts of India, and the difficulties which heads of institutions have had in dealing with them. Students have claimed the right of dictating whether and when terminal examinations should be held. Headmasters have been told that physical education cannot be made compulsory without their previous approval and consent. It is apparently for them, to decide whether a particular teacher should be retained in service or not. They must be allowed to absent themselves from the school with impunity, whenever in their opinion, circumstances warrant such a demonstration and no authority of any kind should be imposed upon them!

No effort should be spared to put an end to this state of affairs, if our dreams of national glory should receive any fulfilment. Otherwise, we shall only be digging at the very foundations of our life. It is unfortunate that there should be great laxity of discipline in the average Indian home and it reacts on the atmosphere of the school. Parental enlightenment should therefore be taken on hand as part of school-work. Intimacy of touch with pupils and the winning of their sympathy and affection is obviously another remedy. Vigilant watchfulness over the pupils entrusted to one's care and prompt removal of any legitimate grievances should always be the aim of a Headmaster.

After all, mistakes may not be entirely on one side. The organisation of rich scholastic life, giving ample scope for the expression of youthful interests and energy, is also another method of dealing with the trouble. Above all, there is the need for some strength and courage to deal with such situations—the way to success has never been through softness.

Speaking on this occasion, it is impossible not to refer to the greatest danger of all, the danger which is now threatening the cause of freedom and civilisation in the shape of Hitler's war. It should be one of the imperative duties of the teacher, to explain to his pupils the great issues at stake and the need for exerting all effort to put down the most serious menace to their independent existence which nations have yet faced in the history of the world. It should be obvious to all right-thinking men that the war is being fought, not merely for the safety and prosperity of Britain, but also for the future happiness and political advancement of India. As has been declared by Aurobindo Ghose, who cannot be suspected of any want of patriotism for India or over-zealous loyalty to the British: "Not only is this battle waged in just self-defence and in defence of the nations threatened with the world domination of Germany and the Nazi system of life, but it is a defence of civilisation and its highest social, cultural and spiritual values and of the whole future of humanity. To this cause our support and sympathy will be unswerving whatever may happen; we look forward to the victory of Britain, and as the eventual result, an era of peace and union among the nations and a better and more secure world-order."

VI.

In conclusion, it only remains for me to wish you and the institutions to which you belong all success and prosperity. It is hoped you will go back from the Conference with a new vigour, born of renewed association with brother teachers, and you will be able to sustain your efforts for the advancement of the profession throughout the year. It is only with persistence and organised work that you will be able to achieve the aims of your association and improve your status in the community. If you find that you are not able to assert your leadership even in educational matters; that you are in a state of helplessness, unable to combat unhealthy restrictions which may be imposed on you and that your conditions of work and service are far from satisfactory, the responsibility will be largely yours. In the well-worn words of Shakespeare:

The fault, dear Brutus is not in our stars,

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
